

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, July 27, 2009 – 5:00p.m.

Mayor's Reception Room, 4th Floor City Hall

Members Present: Ricky DeFoe; Donna Ennis; Warner Wirta; Bea Kitto; Ron Boshey; Tony LaDeaux; Michele Gordon; Renee Van Nett;

Excused Absent: Joy Dorscher

Unexcused Absent: Toni Dickenson

Staff present: Char McLennan

Others present: See sign-in sheets.

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INSTRUCTIONS:

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Donna Ennis at 5:12 pm.

Motion by Warner Wirta that agenda be approved and this was seconded by Bea Kitto. Ron Boshey corrected the spelling of his name in tonight's agenda. The agenda was then approved by all commissioners.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 15, 2009 MEETING:

Motioned by Michele Gordon to approve the minutes, and seconded by Bea Kitto. Minutes approved by all.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM/OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

John Herrvra spoke for almost an hour on the issue of an endorsement of Native Programming at Woodland Hills and Northwood Children's Home. Mr. Herrvra has been working at these programs as a volunteer teaching about culture. He would eventually like to work on language in the school system, K-12. He has been in communication with the Duluth School system and UMD. He has found that he has maintained sobriety using the culture, traditions and language, and he sees these ways helping the youth today that he sees. He wants to see the youth belonging, mastering and independence and generosity. These are things he would like to take to the children. He will be approaching MCT to mandate facilities having a Native program, being as they take so many children from this Native population. He would like to get a sweat-lodge going first on Northwood program. He can do this for males, but not females, but will find someone who can, he explained. He is asking the Commission for an endorsement and support of his program plans. He will in turn report here to the Commission regularly. The CEO's of these programs seem open to his ideas, he shared. He will need grants to get these programs going, and asked for any help in this regard as well. He has been working in the Grand Rapids area, and feels this is now time to begin working in Duluth area. Discussion followed with Donna Ennis sharing about PATH and the Native foster care unit there. Donna also explained the differences

that happen with these homes, and the ceremonies that occur. She will now be heading the Bemidji PATH office, and plans some recruiting of Native foster homes in that area. Ricky DeFoe suggested another meeting with all interested parties to discuss this further. The Chairs went on record supporting Mr. Herrera's ideas and programs.

Wallace Saice spoke to the Commission regarding problems with neighbors he and his wife have been having for two years now. (His wife, Reria was also present). He calls the police, and does not feel the police are taking this seriously. His wife and children were run over at one point, he shared. He has been using a camera to have proof of how this situation is, but the police are "not interested" in seeing them, he said. Many reports have been made and he has taped situations, but was told there was nothing that could be done by the police. One of his kids was attacked yesterday in the car he was in, and a gun was reported by the others, and his place was surrounded by police. All his children came out, and the police went to get a search warrant, and came back at midnight and made them all leave. A couple of BB guns were found, and now his kids are arrested and incarcerated. No shots were fired, he shared, but the neighbors he has been having difficulty with reported this. Mr. Saice does not feel that things have been handled fairly, and believes these charges are unfair. This is in the Lincoln Park area, he shared. Mr. Saice shared that the other parties are black. Mr. Saice is unsure of what to do at this point. The police chief was also present this evening, Gordon Ramsay, who was introduced to Mr. Saice. Chief Ramsay shared that someone will be contacting him soon, and also complimented Mr. Saice on how he has been handling things. Chief Ramsay is going to set up a meeting with this couple and the police in their area within the next couple of days.

OLD BUSINESS:

AICHO'S Gimaajii (YWCA Housing/Indian Center) – Maria Danz was present to report on this issue. The project is continuing to move forward to try to close with Minnesota housing. The lead funding needs to be resolved, so lead removal can begin. Building permit is pretty much done, but not officially sent as of yet. Housing Investment Funds have been requested from the Casino monies. A meeting is scheduled this week in regard to this request. Historic rehab program approval is in the works as well. Construction can begin four to six weeks after this approval is in. If this meeting is not successful, AICHO will report back to us. "We are still moving forward," she stated, "nothing is at a standstill." There are outstanding bills, however, and people want to get paid. Closing is set about six weeks away. Local funds would help things to move faster, she said. Don Bertholami came for a tour of the project last week, she said. This was a good visit, she reported.

Civilian Review Board Report – Things seem to be going well, Tony LaDeaux reported. This was seconded by Police Chief Gordon Ramsay.

HRA Meeting Update – Ron Boshey said the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is going to look at their procedures and policies. HRA will be looking at those with felonies and placing them in housing on a probationary status. Exceptions will be made on a six-month probation period. This will be made into a policy/procedure.

The steps that then need to happen will also be listed. Those involved will have to maintain sobriety, work with the PO officers, etc. There is still work to be done, but this looks promising, according to Ron Boshey. If there is a denial, then a hearing is requested, and someone could bring Indian Legal staff along with them for this. Or a Commissioner or other volunteer/ community member can go along with them to HRA as support and advocates.

New Business:

Police Department, DAIC Liaison – Police Chief Gordon Ramsay was present for this discussion. He brought up the recent murder of Al Morrison and how this case was handled. There had been a concern that he had fallen and “hit his head.” However, it does appear that it was an assault, a homicide, by the two men who were picked up and charged with this. Ron Boshey came along to talk to the family, and he brought Native medicines along. The family really appreciated that Ron came along, and now the police want to integrate this policy in the future as well. Warner Wirta brought up how one article in the paper upset him. This was an article on the storage space the police have, and how disturbing this mess is to the police and the public. This is evidence that is stored, and could be ruined, the police chief shared. It will take monies to remedy this, and that is why it was brought to the public’s attention. The Evidence Room needs to be neat and orderly, Warner Wirta shared. The police chief agreed with him, and pointed out that it will take money and time to get this fixed. The police and the public are expressing concern, Police Chief Gordon Ramsay said. Ron Boshey will be attending the court hearing with the Morrison family, he shared, as they have asked him to do so.

In regard to the Donald and Jean Smith murders, Police Chief Gordon Ramsay said that it is being looked at by “new eyes” at this time. Warner Wirta asked about this case, and shared his concerns that no arrest has yet been made. Mr. Wirta also brought up Trina Langenbrunner, who was also murdered about five years ago.

SLC & Fond Du Lac Social Services - No one from either of these Social Service groups was present this evening.

Planning for Duluth Indian Community Feast/ Forum - August 27th has been picked as the date for this Feast/ Forum. This will be from 5 to 9 pm. Renee Van Nett suggested a Block Party outdoors. Lincoln Park was also looked at as a possible site. Donna Ennis and Renee Van Nett volunteered to be on the Feast Committee. Renee Van Nett volunteered to ask a drum group to come. Donna Ennis will ask the Police Chief to be the keynote speaker for this event. Ricky DeFoe will also stand with the Police Chief for this keynote speech. Staff will look into funds that we have for this forum. We will also need to know if the park is available, and how much it might cost. The Harrison Center could be used as a backup in case of rain/ inclement weather.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Commission members shared announcements and upcoming events.

Next Meeting / Date/ Location:

Monday, August 17, 2009 – 5:00 p.m., Mayor's Reception Room, 4th Floor, City Hall

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned about 7:30pm.